ABSTRACT

An embolic protection device for use in a blood vessel when an interventional procedure is being performed in a stenosed or occluded region to capture any embolic material which may be created and released into the bloodstream during the procedure. The device includes a filtering assembly having a self-expanding strut assembly and a filter element attached thereto. In one embodiment, the filtering assembly is attached to the distal end of a guidewire and is deployed within the patient's vasculature as the guidewire is manipulated into the area of treatment. A restraining sheath placed over the filtering assembly in a coaxial arrangement maintains the filtering assembly in its collapsed position until it is ready to be deployed by the physician. Thereafter, the sheath can be retracted to expose the filtering assembly which will then self-expand within the patient's vasculature. Interventional devices can be delivered over the guidewire and any embolic debris created during the interventional procedure and released into the blood stream will enter the filtering assembly and be captured therein. Other embodiments include filtering assemblies attached to an outer tubular member and inner shaft member which apply axial force to the distal ends of the assembly to either expand or contract the struts as needed.